

A

L E T T E R

TO THE

Rev. Mr. *Samuel Chandler.*





A *Letter preceding*

L E T T E R

T O

Mr. *Samuel Chandler* :

B E I N G

A DEFENSE of the *Church of England's* re-  
quiring SUBSCRIPTION to *Explanatory*  
*Articles of FAITH.*

Occasioned by Mr. *Chandler's* late Book, intituled,  
*The Case of Subscription to Explanatory Articles of*  
*Faith, as a Qualification for Admission to the Chris-*  
*tian Ministry, calmly and impartially reviewed; in*  
*Answer to*

1. A late Pamphlet, intituled, *The Church of England*  
*Vindicated, in requiring Subscription from the Clergy*  
*to the XXXIX Articles.*
2. *The Reverend Mr. White's* APPENDIX to his  
*Third Letter to a Dissenting Gentleman.*

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By *GEORGE HARVEST*, M. A.  
Fellow of *Magdalen College, Cambridge.*

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ἙΑΠΑΝΙΣΤΑ ὁρθὰ ἐνώπιον τῶν συνιέντων, φησὶν ἡ γραφή· τὰτ' εἰσι τῶν  
ὅσοι ὑπ' αὐτῇ σαφηνισθεῖσαν τῶν γραφῶν ἐξηγήσιν κατὰ τὸν  
ἐκκλησιαστικὸν κανόνα ἐκδεχόμενοι διασώζουσι.

Clem. Alexand. Strom. 6.

*Blame not before Thou hast examined the Truth: Under-*  
*stand first, and then rebuke.*

Ecclus. xi. 7.

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T H E T H I R D E D I T I O N .

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L O N D O N :

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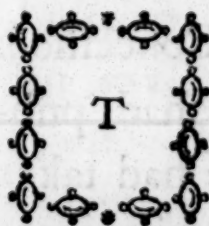
A

# LETTER

TO

Mr. SAMUEL CHANDLER, &c.

S I R,



THE Temper and Moderation  
with which your late Book concerning "Subscription to Explanatory Articles of Faith, &c." is written, together with your free Declaration that you are "Open to Conviction," pag. 28. have encouraged me to address myself to you in

B

this



this manner: When I speak of Temper and Moderation, I do really design to commend your Performance; tho', it must be ingenuously owned, that I mean little more than what may be justly esteemed Temper and Moderation in *you*, whose Productions in the Controversial Way, have been no more distinguished by the Moderation and Calmness, than by the Accuracy and Impartiality of the Author of them.—You tell the Reader, in the Preface, that the Publication of your Papers has been long delayed; for which you are pleased to make some sort of Apology; but an Apology for the poor Use you appear to have made of the *long Delay*, is still wanting; or indeed rather an Apology for publishing these Papers *at all*. Really, Sir, were I to be your Apologist as touching the Publication of these Papers, I verily believe that I should confess, amongst other generous Concessions and Allowances, that my Friend had published too soon; wishing that he had taken Time for a still *more calm and impartial Review*. How far your Book unluckily verifies the Observation made in the first Paragraph of the Book you principally write  
in



in Answer to, viz. ' that it is the *Trade* of  
 ' a certain *Herd of Scribblers*, to pick up  
 ' all the *old* Objections which have been  
 ' urged against any Part of the *Established*  
 ' Government of the *Church of England*,  
 ' and to retail them out to the Public, from  
 ' time to time, as *new* and unanswered,' is  
 left to the impartial Reader.

It is not my Intention to vindicate either  
 of those Pamphlets which you attempt  
 to answer. The Principles which they  
 maintain will indeed be vindicated by my  
 Argument; but, as to Particulars, either  
 of those judicious Authors, to whom you  
 are Opponent in the present Debate, is well  
 able to do Justice to what he had ad-  
 vanced, if thought necessary, without my  
 Assistance. 'Tis enough for me, without  
 being their *Vindicator*, to be their *Fellow-*  
*Labourer*, and to have the Honour of join-  
 ing myself to so good Company, in this  
 Cause. Mr. *White's* Letters to " A Dis-  
 " senting Gentleman," sufficiently com-  
 mend his excellent Qualifications, as a  
 Writer, to all who read with Judgment and  
 Impartiality. The Book intituled, ' *The*  
 ' *Church of England Vindicated*, &c.' is an

excellent Performance, and the World has given it just Applause; tho' You cannot find much more in it than, "Besides a great deal of Ill-nature and Scurrilous Language, some specious Things said in Favour of Subscription." Let me observe, by the way, the Elegancy and Propriety of your Language. Besides a great deal of Ill-nature, and scurrilous Language. What? any high Crimes and Misdemeanours?—No, nothing truly very bad, only some specious Things said in Favour of Subscription. *Atticam Elegantiam!* Here's a Justness of Thought, and Association of Ideas without Prejudice, in a calm Considerer, an impartial Reviewer! Besides, I dismiss it with this Reflection, that the Complaint of scurrilous Language puts me in Mind of Dr. Bentley's Free-thinker, who complained, truly, that *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, a certain ill-natured Writer, had been very scurrilous; that he had not, forsooth, used Mr. Free-thinker as a Gentleman.

But my Business with you, at present, Sir, is to try the Strength of an Argument in Defense of *Explanatory Articles* of Faith; which, when you have fairly confuted,

futed, you shall have my Leave to publish as much more as you please, against *Subscription*. Only let me give you this Caution; Do not first misrepresent, and then confute that Misrepresentation (as your Manner is) for that will not prove any Thing against my Argument, but against yourself only. Now the Thing which you constantly represent as Unreasonable, and even as Unjust, and Unchristian, is the Subscription to Explanatory Articles of Faith, as a Qualification for Admission into the Christian Ministry: And you contend for a Creed, composed of the *Words of Scripture only*\*, to answer the same Purpose. By Explanatory Articles of Faith, I presume, we both mean the same Thing; viz. certain Human Explications of the Words of Scripture; those Words which are supposed to contain The Principles of the Christian Religion; which Explanations are proposed to be subscribed, or assented to by the Candidates for the Christian Ministry. Let the one be called, for Brevity-sake, *Explanatory Articles*; the other, *Scripture Creeds*. At present we will use

\* Passim.



the Word ASSENT, and SUBSCRIPTION, *indifferently*; for the Debate is, not about the *Manner* of expressing, or giving Assent; but about the *Thing* to which Assent or Subscription is required. *Your* Language, that Subscription is a *Qualification* for Admission into the Christian Ministry, shall be complied with, to avoid Contention about Words; though, in truth, the Subscription is not *itself* the *Qualification*, but the TEST, or *Evidence* of the Qualification for the Ministry.—The Case then is as follows: You contend for Subscription to a *Scripture-Creed* only, as such Qualification: I, on the contrary, maintain the Reasonableness of Subscription to Explanatory Articles. The Question is, *not* about the Articles of the *Church of England*, or about any other Explanatory Articles in particular; but it is, in *general*, concerning *Explanatory* Articles, as *Explanatory*. Thus stands the Question.

Now, to be decisive, I will not put the Debate with you upon the Foot of *Expediency*, or *Inexpediency*, of your, or my, Method of framing Articles for Subscribers: The Question shall not be, which Method, that of *Explanatory Articles*, or of a *Scripture-Creed*,



*Creed*, is preferable? But I will try the Point with you, upon the Foot of *Necessity*; and, if I shew that 'tis *necessary*, indispensably necessary, that Candidates for the Ministry should subscribe to *Explanatory Articles*, there will be an End of the Question; for such *Necessity* does at once put an End to all Disputes about *Expediency* and *Inexpediency*.

First then, Sir, you allow that 'tis necessary there should be *Pastors* or *Teachers* in the *Church of Christ*, to instruct the People in the *Christian Faith*: That they, whose Office is to instruct others in the Christian Faith, must *themselves* hold the Christian Faith: That, therefore, the *Pastors*, or *Teachers*, of the Christian Faith, must be duly *Qualified* for such their Office, by their holding the *Christian Faith*, i. e. the Faith of the Gospel: That, therefore, certain Persons must have a Right, or be appointed to judge, to examine and determine, concerning the *Qualification*, the *Fitness* of those who are Candidates for the Christian Ministry: That the Rule of their Judgment, or Determination concerning such *Qualification* of Teachers, is the holy Scripture.—Thus

far, I think, we are both agreed; at least, I see no Reason why it may be supposed you should deny any of these Propositions. Indeed, as to the two last Propositions, the *Quaker* will deny the former, and the *Papist* or *Roman Catholic* the latter; but I am sure that the Practice of all Protestant Churches (as they are usually called) will justify my laying down these Principles, as *Postulata*, or common Principles in this Debate.

Well then, the *Holy Scripture* is the Rule by which the Persons, who are to examine the Candidates for the Christian Ministry, are to be guided, in order to determine whether they be *qualified*, or not *qualified*, for Admission to it.—Now, I doubt we are going to differ: *You* think 'tis sufficient to answer the End of Examination (which is, that they who are to teach the Truths of the Gospel, should be duly *qualified* for their Office, by their *Belief* of the Truths of the Gospel) if a *Scripture-Creed*, i. e. a Formulary consisting of the Words of Scripture, *without any Explication*, containing the *Principles*, and perhaps some Doctrines of Christianity, be subscribed by the Candidates,

dates. On the contrary, I assert the *Necessity* of Subscription to *Explanatory Articles*: And my Reason for asserting the *Necessity* of this Subscriptions, is drawn from the *absolute Insufficiency* of the other Method proposed for the Examination of Candidates for the Christian Ministry, *viz.* that of subscribing to the *Scripture-Creed* only, to answer the End of Subscription; which is, that the Ministers, the Teachers of the Gospel do *themselves* hold the *Faith of the Gospel*.

'Tis scarce worth while to take notice, that though I every-where speak of the *Qualification* of Candidates for the Ministry, which is their Belief of the Truths of the Gospel, I do not mean that *That* is the *only Qualification* for the Ministry: No, surely; Morals and Learning are also required in this Case. But these have nothing to do in the present Question. We are talking about the *Qualification* of FAITH, to which *Articles* and *Subscription* are relative, and not about the other Qualifications of Morals and Learning; about which (except indeed with the *sinless Elect*, whose *Morals* need not to be enquired into; the *gifted Brethren*, who  
look



look upon *Letter-Learning* as *carnal* and *unprofitable*) there can be no Dispute.

To shew then, as plainly as possible, the *Insufficiency* of Subscription to the *Scripture-Creed* only, I would lay down the following Observations.

I. The *Faith* of the Gospel is That one *Sense* of the *Words* of the *Scripture* which was affixed to them, or intended by the sacred Writers.

II. The *Words* of *Scripture* having been used or taken in several *different Senses* and *Interpretations*; it is thereby become *ambiguous* and *indeterminate*, what *Sense* any Person affixes to the *Words* of *Scripture*. *This is if only*

*the Bible to be taken as given for not allowing*  
*reason to be taken as given for not allowing*

III. An Assent, or Subscription, therefore, to the *Words* of *Scripture*, or to a *Scripture-Creed* only, can be no *Proof*, *Test*, or *Evidence* of any Person's holding the *Faith* of the Gospel. *a just conclusion from that principle is, 2.*

*First,*



*First*, The Faith of the Gospel is That *one* Sense of the Word of Scripture, which was fixed to them, or intended by the sacred Writers.

This is self-evident. The Sense of Scripture can be but *one*, and that one Sense is undoubtedly be that only which was intended by the sacred Writers. *How* we are to judge, and to determine *what* this Sense is, is *another* Question, to be considered hereafter.

*Secondly*, The Words of Scripture having been used or taken in several *different* Senses and Interpretations; it is thereby become ambiguous and indeterminate, *what* Sense any Person affixes to the Words of Scripture.

'Tis extremely difficult to guard sufficiently against being misunderstood, or misrepresented, by those who cannot, or will not understand a plain Distinction. But, I express myself as clearly as possible upon this head, my Meaning is This; that Words being used in *different* Senses, by different Persons, is the Foundation of *Ambiguity*; and therefore, the Words being used

used by one Person in one Sense, by another Person in another Sense; it will be *doubtful, uncertain, or ambiguous, what particular Sense* any Person affixes to them, or *how* He understands them, till he has *explained and declared, what Sense it is* that he does affix to them. When different Persons affix different Meanings to the *same* Words, then these Words become, in Language or Discourse, so far *ambiguous, or indeterminate*. Neither you, nor I can know how others understand them, without *Explanation*. As to the Thing itself, that the Words of Scripture are thus differently understood by different Persons, 'tis Fact, and undeniable: And 'tis equally certain, that it cannot be known from the Use of the Scripture-Words only, what it is that any one means by them: and that therefore Explanation is become necessary.

Take this Proposition, for instance, *The Word was God*: Can I tell merely from another Person's repeating these Words to me what he *means* by them? Is he an *Athanasian*? Is he a *Sabellian*? Is he an *Arian* or, a *Socinian*? In a Word, does he mean

*something*

something by it; or, does he mean *nothing*; for there is plainly as great, the same infinite Difference, between what the one means, and what the other means, in this Case, as there is between *necessary Existence*, and *not being*. How is it possible that I should know what you *mean*, what *Sense* you affix to this Proposition, unless you *explain* it to me, since the Words are used in many different Senses?

Again; *This is my Body*: The *absolute* Meaning of this Proposition is *plain* to me. 'Tis, *to me*, just as plain that these Words are *not* to be understood *literally*, as it is that Christ's Crucifixion is not to be understood *figuratively*. Yet, is not this very Proposition, in *some respect*, *ambiguous*? i. e. Is it *plain* and *certain* what another Man means by it? Do all mean the same Thing by the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*? If I ask a *Papist*, or a *Roman-Catholic*, the Doctrine is *Transubstantiation*, and a *real Sacrifice*: If a *Lutheran*, *Consubstantiation*, or *Impanation*. If another, *Real Presence*: A Fourth tells me of an *unbloody Sacrifice*; a Fifth, of *Spiritual Privileges* annexed to the receiving



ing the Elements of Bread and Wine. The next gives me, what he calls a " Plain Account " count of the Lord's Supper," which, if indeed understood, as I would willingly understand his Meaning, is not, perhaps, justly exceptionable: Another frankly declares, with all Plainness of Speech and Simplicity, that he really means nothing more by the *Communion of the Body, and Blood of Christ*, than the *true Spiritual Communion* of Christians, in mutual Love and Charity. Now, Sir, say, I beseech you, How can I possibly discover the Meaning of *any One* of these Persons, merely from his telling me, that he believes the Truth of our Lord's Words, when he says, *This is my Body*? Or, is it not *ambiguous*, what he means by those Scripture-Words.

Once more—*Christ came into the World to save Sinners*. He saves Sinners, says the *Papist*, or the *Roman Catholic*, not only by his Doctrine and Example, and the Merit of his Sufferings, but by purchasing, by his own Blood, an *Infallible Church*; by joining with, or being added to which, Men are saved.—Christ saves Sinners, says the

*Supra-*



*Supralapsarian*, by making the indispensable, necessary, infinite Satisfaction to infinite Justice.—He saves Sinners by making full Satisfaction to the Divine Justice, so that nothing remains on our Part, but *true justifying Faith*, which is of Course attended with, or is *productive* of Obedience. So says the *Antinomian*, or *Solifidian*. Another says (and says rightly) That Christ saves Sinners by the Morality of his Gospel, Repentance, Obedience, and Perfection; by leaving Men a complete Example of all Virtue and Holiness in his own spotless Life; by enforcing the Practice of his Laws by the Sanctions of eternal Rewards and Punishments; and by enabling all those who are *willing to do his Will*, with the Grace and Assistance of his Holy Spirit; but, *principally* by suffering upon the the Cross a *proper vicarious Punishment*, and being an *expiatory Sacrifice* for the Sins of the whole World; the great Method of Reconciliation between God and Man, *freely appointed* by the *original essential Goodness* of the Father.—But if you inquire of a *Christian-Deist* (one who will readily subscribe to a

*Scrip-*

*Scripture-Creed*), whether, or not, he believes, that Christ came into the World to save Sinners, he will reply, undoubtedly he did; and for that End, he preached very excellent *Morality*, and withal gave an Instance of the Practicableness of it in his own Life, beyond any *other Moralist*, or Prophet; and that he died in *Confirmation* of the Truth of it. As for any *proper Sacrifice* in the *Death of Christ*, that Notion, it seems, took its Rise from some Passages in Scripture, where the Apostles, (St. *PAUL* in particular, whose manner it was to *become all Things to all Men*) are speaking in Accommodation of the gross Notions and Prejudices of the *unmetaphysical Jew*, but we who understand the *Nature and Reason of Things*, have not so learned the Apostles: Thus the *Socinian*.—Now is it not *ambiguous*, what any Person means by these Scripture-Words, *Christ came into the World to save Sinners*? Are they not understood in several *different* Senses? And is there not therefore a Necessity for *Explanation*?

The Conclusion is, that, it being thus *Ambiguous* and *Indeterminate*, *what Sense* any Person affixes to the *Words of Scripture*, amidst the several *different* Senses and Interpretations; therefore some *Explanation* is *necessary* to be assented to, or subscribed by those who are Candidates for the Christian Ministry, as a *Test* of their *Qualification* for the Office of the Ministry; which Qualification is their holding the *Faith* of the Gospel.

If Mr. *Chandler* now ask that Question of Questions, *Who shall judge?* who shall judge and determine *what* is the *Faith* of the Gospel? *Which* it is, of the various, and perhaps contradictory Senses and Interpretations that Men have put upon the *Words* of Scripture, that *is the True Sense*? I answer, that, in the present Case, where the believing the Doctrines, or holding the Faith of the Gospel, is a *Qualification* for the Office of the Ministry; undoubtedly, those Persons whose Right it is, or who are delegated, or appointed by others, to examine and determine concerning the *Qualification* of Candidates for the Ministry, who are qualified, and who not; THEY must judge *what is that Qualification*, which



is the *Rule* by which their Judgments are to be directed. But that Qualification, as before observed, is the Believing the *Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, the *Faith* of the Gospel. Who then, in the Name of Common Sense, must judge *what are* the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ? or, *what is* the *Faith* of the Gospel, but *They* who are to judge of the Qualification of others for the Ministry? Nothing is more evident. If I am to judge of *your* Qualification for the Ministry; if such Qualification be your Belief of the Truths of the Gospel, and, if it be *ambiguous*, *what are* the Truths of the Gospel; what is the *true Sense* of Scripture Texts relating to any Doctrine; *who*, I pray, is to determine, in this Case, *what is* the Doctrine of Scripture, *You*, or *I*? If *You* are, 'tis a flat Contradiction to the Supposition that *I* am to judge. Certainly, if *I* am to judge, whether *you* are qualified for the Ministry, or not; *I* must be determined, not by *your* Opinion, but by *my own*. The Right of *private Judgment* stands just where it did, and is not in the least affected by these Considerations. Private Judgment is *supposed* on both Sides. The Candidate has judged for himself, what  
is

is the true Sense of Scripture; and the Examiner is to judge for himself, whether the Candidate be *qualified* or not. Every Man's Judgment must be, *to him, the True Judgment, the Truth of the Case*; nor can it be otherwise without a Contradiction; For, if you think your Own Judgment, or Opinion, *not to be true or right*; 'tis plainly, *not your Judgment, or Opinion*, but what you perceive to be *Error*. Whatever a Man judges to be the *true Sense* and Meaning of Scripture, *that is*, and must be *to him, the Doctrine of Scripture, the Faith of the Gospel*; and consequently, whosoever holds or maintains *another* Sense, cannot but appear *to him, not to hold the Faith of the Gospel*. Indeed, not being *infallible*, he cannot *absolutely affirm*, as a certain Truth, that whosoever so differs from him, does *not hold the Christian Faith*; but yet he cannot but *think, and judge, and be of Opinion*, that he does not; and therefore, if a Candidate for the Ministry give an Explication of the Words of Scripture, an Account of the Truths of the Gospel, as his Faith, which the Person who is Judge of his Qualification for the Ministry, thinks to be er-

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roneous,

roneous ; he cannot consistently admit him, *as qualified*, to the Office of the Ministry. Therefore, *whatever Sense of Scripture* appears, to those who are to judge of the Qualification of Candidates for the Ministry, to be the *true Sense* of Scripture ; *That* must be *Their Rule* in judging of such *Qualification*.

I have purposely omitted to take notice of that wild Scheme of Subscription, *viz. Subscription to the Scripture, as the Word of God* ; the beloved Project of the Friends of an *unlimited Comprehension*. Because, 'tis indeed the same Thing in Effect and Consequence, with the Subscription to a *Scriptural Creed*. In shewing, therefore, the Vanity of one Scheme, I expose both. 'Tis evident, that all who will subscribe to the *Scripture-Creed*, will subscribe as readily to Scripture *as the Word of God* ; and, equally, that all who will subscribe to Scripture as the Word of God, will subscribe to the *Scripture-Creed* ; supposing always that they mean *the same Thing* by *Scripture*, and hold the *same Writings* to be *authentic* ; and that the only Difference between these two sorts of Subscribers, is, that One subscribes to the  
*whole*



*whole* Scripture ; the Other to a Part of it, which is the *Scripture-Creed*.

Thus have I endeavoured to reduce the voluminous Controversy about Subscription, to a narrow Compass. The many Books that have been written at home, and the many Disputes abroad, particularly among the Dissenters in the North of *Ireland*, sufficiently declare the Importance of this Subject ; and withal the Difficulty of coming to a Conclusion about it ; and that, perhaps, owing to the wrong Ways that have been taken in the Management of the Debate. The shortest Way of coming to a Conclusion in any intricate Subject, is, to argue, if possible, from some Principles which the Adversaries are compelled to grant ; and which cannot be denied, without contradicting some common *first Principle*. Thus, from this Principle, the *Necessity of a Christian Ministry*, I have deduced, at least, in my Judgment, the *Necessity of Subscription*. I might have argued from the Nature of the *Christian Church*, as a *visible Society*, &c. but then our Adversaries would not have admitted some Principles without a tedious, and perhaps fruitless Debate about them ;

but All readily own the Necessity of a *Christian Ministry in general*: That some Persons are to be appointed, or set apart for the Office of the Ministry: From thence, therefore, I have drawn my Conclusion, which is submitted to the impartial and judicious Reader.

And now, Sir, the Consequence that I charge, not upon *You* (for I distinguish) but upon your Principle, is This; That, as your Scheme of Subscription admits to the Office of the Christian Ministry all Men *indiscriminately*, who will subscribe to the *Words of Scripture*, the *Scripture-Creed*; so it does hereby open a Door to the Ministry, for all sorts of Persons, for *Heretics* and *Enthusiasts* of every Tribe, and of every Denomination, if they do but profess themselves to be *Christians* by such Subscription. Into the Church, as Teachers and Pastors, they may all enter, if they will but subscribe to the Scriptural-Creed, which the *soundest* and most *rational Divine*, the wildest *Opiniatre*, the *Quaker*, and the *Fifth-monarchy Man*, will equally do. All profess to be Believers of the Truth, the *Faith* of the Gospel, as any one of them will readily  
answer

answer you he does, if you ask him the Question. *Papists, Independents, Arians, Socinians, Christian-Deists, Chubbists, &c. Ridente Turcâ, nec dolente Judæo*, will all be admitted to the Ministry, without Exception, upon your *Scheme* of Subscription; and, perhaps, with the subtile *Jesuit*, in Sheep's Cloathing, at the Head of them. Now, Sir, behold your Scheme of Subscription! and confess that it is a Scheme unavoidably introductive of the utmost Disorder and Confusion into the Church of Christ. What will soon (if this Scheme take place, What will soon) become of the Religion of the common People! or indeed of their Understandings, between *Athanasius* and *Arius*, *Luther* and *Calvin*, *Foster* and *Pickering*, perpetually engaged in holy Animosities with each other; in contradicting and confuting, each the other's *contrary* Doctrine; dividing the good Christian People into numberless Sects and Factions, who, when once so separated, seldom fail to be *kindly-affectioned* to one another, in proportion to their Religious Differences; who are always madly and outrageously zealous



for they *know not what*, and That, in Proportion to their Ignorance.

To point out any way to avoid this Consequence, by the Addition of *new Laws*, is to change the State of the present Question; and, from this, Mr. *Chandler* is not to recede, by any Evasion or Subterfuge. His Scheme is Subscription, or Assent to a *Scripture-Creed*, as a *Qualification*, &c. Mine is, Subscription to *Explanatory Articles*.—But, if he will fairly give up his present Scheme, which does not seem to be long defensible, I will help him to a much better in the stead of it; and that is, the *prohibiting, by Law*, the teaching of different Doctrines, without Subscription: Or, the subscribing to *Explanatory Articles*, as Articles not of *Faith*, but of *Peace only*; so as to be bound never to *contradict* those Articles in Teaching or Writing. If Mr. *Chandler* think it worth his while to defend this Scheme, he may perhaps deserve my Attention. In the mean time, I would just mention some of the several Difficulties it will labour under: As, *First*, According to this Method, the great Concern will be, not  
what

what Doctrine the Teacher would, or *should* teach, but what he *should not* ; whereas the Business of *Teachers*, is to *instruct* the People in the Christian Faith ; and consequently, 'tis the Business of those who require Subscription, who appoint Persons for the Ministry, to take care that they are *qualified*, that they are *fit to teach* the Faith ; and not merely to be *silent* as to contrary unscriptural Doctrines. 2. According to this Method, very unfit Persons would be admitted to the Ministry ; People who *believe nothing* : And consequently, since they who believe not the Doctrines of Christianity, cannot reasonably be supposed *to teach* those Doctrines ; numberless Congregations might never hear any thing of *Christianity* from the Pulpit, but Discourses of *Moral Virtue* only. Good *Heathens*, by such kind of Instruction, they might be, but never *Christians*. 3. By this Method, the great Doctrines, the Principles of Christianity (which some affect to call *speculative*, absurdly meaning *unnecessary*) would by degrees be laid aside. The *prudent* Preacher would *seldom* mention, and *never* choose to enlarge upon them, for fear of exceeding the Bounds by *Law prescribed*,

*scribed*, and wander into some *illegal* Explication. 4. Besides, what would Mr. CHANDLER, with many others, think of this Expedient? Does not *this* also bear somewhat hard upon Christian Liberty? If it be no *Imposition*, if it do not put some Men upon preaching, or teaching what they *do not* believe; it does certainly prohibit and hinder them from teaching what they *do*. And, 5. By what *Authority*, will Mr. Chandler say, is this *Prohibition* laid upon the Ministers of Christ? If *Imposition* of Articles be an obliging the Subscribers to teach the *Commandments of Men*, as Mr. Chandler will argue; then this *Prohibition* is a *preventing* Mens teaching the *Doctrines* (what they esteem such) of *Christ*? And what *Authority* can any one have to *prohibit* in the one Case, more than to *impose* in the other? 6. Would Mr. Chandler be confined to preach, or to repeat *Scripture-Creeds* to his Hearers, without any Explication?—These Things, I leave to your Consideration.

It will be observed, that I generally use the Words, ASSENT, and SUBSCRIPTION, as if they meant the same Thing. There is plainly



plainly a Difference; but till I am sure what Use, if any, will be made of that Difference, there will be no great Occasion to consider it. Surely, the Difference between *Assent* and *Subscription*, is not *This*; viz. that a Man may be bound to *assent*, or to *affirm verbally*, that he believes certain Truths, and yet not be obliged to set his Hand to Paper, in Testimony of such Belief, or such Affirmation; for which there may, however, be a *Reason*; but then 'tis such a Reason, as may be pleaded in the Behalf of all those who act, as the unjust Steward did, not *well*, but *wisely*. However, the *Explanation* of Scripture, the *Explanatory Articles* are the Thing we are concerned for; and *not* the *particular Manner* of giving our Assent to such Explanation.

But to conclude this Point, the Argument, Sir, in Defence of *Explanatory Articles of Faith*, as a *Test* of the Qualification of Persons for Admission to the Christian Ministry, lies before You. The Point by me maintained, is, the *Necessity of Explanatory Articles*, for which you have my Reasons. I remind you of this, because any Harangues about *Impositions, Inconveniencies, Hardships, &c.* will

will be, as I have stated the Question, wholly impertinent; whereas, if the Question had been about the *Expediency* or *Inexpediency* of Articles; you might then, perhaps, have had some Colour to *rheticate* upon the Subject in the Manner you usually do. Putting the Question upon the Footing of *Necessity*, there can be no possible Ground for any Declamations, or for any Objections drawn from *Consequences*, which you extremely delight in; it being certain, and allowed, that the *Necessity* of a Thing over-rules all Objections from *Consequences* against it. You cannot in the present Case, argue against me from *Consequences*, as I do against you; for my Objection to your Scheme of subscribing to a Scripture-Creed only, is, *not* that such Subscription is *not necessary*, but that 'tis not *sufficient*; that *more* is necessary: And the Appeal is made, not to any *popular Prejudices*, which are certainly on your Side, in the present Question; but to the Judgment of those who can judge and distinguish. Your Business, Sir, therefore now is, not to hunt after Objections, as your Manner is, among *Calvinists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Kirkmen,*  
&c.

&c. much less to ramble so far from home as to *France, Geneva, Moscow*, and, I know not whither, for something to say for yourself *Vid.* pag. 42, 43, but to confine yourself to the Point in Debate between us; To shew, if you can, something *false* in *Premisses*, or *wrong* in *Conclusion*; Either, to invalidate the Argument alledged for *Explanatory Articles*, or to give up the Question.

Thus much for the Argument——But I must not take my Leave of you, without paying some particular Regard to your Performance, if it be only for the sake of Ceremony. But a few Remarks must excuse me.

Page 15. You ask, Whether “abstaining  
“from all Kinds of Worship, settling Mens  
“secular Accounts, Sleeping, Riding, Feast-  
“ing, Carousing, Visiting, Cards, Assem-  
“blies, Routs, Riots, &c. be the proper  
“Way of sanctifying the Lord’s-day?”  
These Things you object to Those of the  
Church of *England*: Would to God there  
were no Ground for such Objections! May  
all those who are guilty of this great Of-  
fence, effectually reply to the Objection by  
reforming



reforming their Manners! An Offence, which no good Man can speak of without Indignation and Abhorrence! To do Justice, I must own, that the Manner of keeping the *Lord's-day* among Dissenters, though indeed I do not approve of it, as 'tis *over rigid and precise*, is yet, in some Respects, much to their Honour. But then, is not the *Lord's-day* as duly observed by the true and sound Members of the *Church of England*? And is not the *Church of England* intirely clear of giving any, the least, Countenance to the forementioned Enormities? Mr. *Chandler* acknowledges it; and takes notice very justly, that the *Church of England* is very strict in her Ordinance as to the *Lord's Day*; and recommends *that excellent Canon*, as he truly styles it, that “ all manner of Persons  
 “ shall keep the *Lord's-day*—in hearing the  
 “ Word of God read and taught——in pri-  
 “ vate and public Prayer—in acknowledg-  
 “ ing their Offences to God, and amending  
 “ of the same——in reconciling themselves  
 “ charitably to their Neighbours where  
 “ Displeasure hath been——in oftentimes re-  
 “ ceiving the Communion of the Body and  
 “ Blood of Christ——in visiting the Poor  
 “ and

“and Sick—and using all godly and sober  
 “Conversation.” Yes: ’Tis the shame-  
 less Relaxation of Discipline; the not exer-  
 cising the proper Civil, or Ecclesiastical Au-  
 thority; the wicked Examples——These  
 are the Things that are blameable; and it  
 concerns those, through whom these Of-  
 fences come, to think of this Matter very  
 seriously. Let no Man think it enough that  
 He *himself* is innocent, if he connive at Of-  
 fenders; for, *Wo be unto that Man through*  
*whom* (whether directly, or indirectly; de-  
 signedly, or undesignedly) *Ofence cometh.*

But, in what follows, pag. 20. I must in-  
 tirely differ with you, viz. That the Church  
 of England is guilty of *Imposition* in re-  
 quiring Subscription to Articles of Religion;  
 where you use the Word *Imposition* in a *bad*  
*Sense*, though you allow that *if the Law be*  
*good*, the *Imposition* is *right*; and therefore  
 it seems, that *Imposition*, like *Heresy*, p. 50.  
 is a Word *very harmless* in its *original Mean-*  
*ing*. I have shewn, that this *Imposition* then  
 of the Church, is a *right* or *equitable Church-*  
*Law*; and therefore your charging *Impo-*  
*sition* upon the Church of England, in the  
*bad*

*bad Sense, as Injury, or Oppression, is a Calumny.*

I do not much care to repeat what you say about “ *Imposition in a stronger Light,*” &c. p. 21.—But your Ingratitude for the Blessings and Privileges you enjoy under a mild and good Government, is, I must say it, extremely blameable: At the same time, I cannot but admire the Goodness and Lenity of our excellent Government, whose Glory and *Divine Quality* it is, to be tender and indulgent even to the *Unthankful* and *the Evil!*

There is a Piece of Reasoning in p 25. which really almost discourages me from going on in the Debate with you; and That, for a very different Reason than your arguing *too cloosely*. Your Words are, “ Men are laid, by Law, under an ABSOLUTE Necessity of subscribing Articles; OR, if they pretend to exercise their Ministry in the Chuch under the Incapacity that attends Non-subscription, their Fate will be Imprisonment, &c.” That is to say, Men are under an *Absolute Necessity* of taking Oaths to the Government: Or, if they pretend to exercise the Powers of a Civil Office

(requiring



(requiring the taking such Oaths, as a *Test* of their Fidelity to the Government) under the Incapacity that attends the not taking them, their Fate will be Imprisonment, &c.

*Quid cum isto Homine facias?*—

Your Quotations from the *Fathers*, you call the most ancient CREEDS (for what Reason I cannot imagine), and you make yourself responsible for the Translation, *p.* 88. I understand not why this is said; for certainly every Writer who translates is so responsible; even though he take a *Fellow-Labourer* to his Assistance. I have no Time to examine particularly, but I observe that your Translations are somewhat better than usual. Time was, when you did not so well translate. Perhaps it may be received as no great Compliment, if I take Notice, that your Translation is, in the main, tolerably *Orthodox*; which, however, is a Wonder, and an Instance of great Fairness in a Gentleman who speaks so freely of the *Athanasian Heresy*, as you do, *p.* 71, for which Mr. *Whiston* will care for you; as also for translating the Quotation from the *Apostolical Constitutions* much after the same Manner as he himself

D would

would have done. Πιστευω και βαπτίζομαι εἰς  
 ἓνα ἄγεννητον \*, και εἰς ἓνα Κυριον Ιησυν τον  
 Χριστον — τον πρωτοτοκον πασης κτισεως, which  
 you render the *First-born of every Crea-  
 ture*, Page 117. Now a learned Man,  
 who had a real Dislike to the *Arian*,  
 or rather the *Socinian Heresy*, would have  
 rendered it otherwise. 'Tis true indeed,  
 the Words Πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, *Colos.*  
*i. 15.* are so rendered in our Translation;  
 but yet, since the *English* Words may seem  
 to imply a placing, or ranking the Son in  
 the Order, or among the Number of Crea-  
 tures, a judicious and orthodox Writer  
 would have translated differently; especial-  
 ly as the *Socinian* Writers, in particular,  
 fancy that they gain something by the com-  
 mon Translation. Πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως,  
 is τεχθεις προ πασης κτισεως, *Before* all Crea-

\* By the Way, the Word ἄγεννητος, here applied to the *Father*,  
 is an Evidence against the high Antiquity which Mr. *Whiston*  
 gives to these *Constitutions*: For the Word ἄγεννητος, though it  
 may not be easy to ascertain the Time when 'twas first so applied,  
 yet I believe no Instance can be produced of its being applied to the  
*Father*, so early as the Age of *Clement*, to whom Mr. *Whiston*  
 ascribes the *Constitutions*: And, if ἄγεννητος, applied to the *Father*,  
 was the Word always in Use till the Rise of the *Sabellian* or *Patri-  
 passian Heresy*, and then changed by the Church in Opposition to  
 that *Heresy*, into ἄγεννητος, as is not improbable; This will bring  
 down the Date of the *Constitutions* much lower.

tion;

tion; as God is said to be Πρεσβυτατον των  
 εντων Θεος, *Diog. Laert.* not, *the most an-  
 tient of*, but, *Before all Things*. And, in  
*Origen*, the Son is said to be Πρεσβυτατον  
 παντων των δημιουργητων. The Sense  
 is, *Before all Creatures*. Once more :  
 ευδοκία τε πατρος, *the good Pleasure of the  
 Father*, in the *Arian* Strain, as if the Exist-  
 ence of the Son were owing to the *Will* of  
 the Father, in the modern metaphysical  
 Sense of that Word, just as the Existence  
 of *Creatures* is.—There are other Things  
 in your Translation not accurate.

You see that I write *Greek* without Ac-  
 cent, just as you do, being willing to give  
 no Offense in *Things unnecessary*. Perhaps,  
 you make the Affair serious, and would give  
 a Reason for it, which will equally expunge  
 all *Points* out of the Bible. This you will  
 think trifling; but give me a Reason, if  
 you can, why *translating, dividing, point-  
 ing*, the Words of Scripture, by *Authority*,  
 is not as truly, so far, *explaining* Scripture  
 by *Authority*, as proposing the Sense of Scrip-  
 ture, in Articles confirmed by *Authority*: If,  
 therefore, *explaining* Scripture by *Autho-  
 rity*, be blameable; 'tis as truly, though,  
 D 2 perhaps,



perhaps, not *equally* so, in both Cases.

— However, this might have passed for a Mark, at least, of your profound Erudition, and Acquaintance with antient Manuscripts, had not your MSS. in the singular Number (*Title page*) occasioned some small Suspicion to the contrary.— Take care that you do not ‘*burn your Fingers*’ by ‘*Dabbling*’, in MSS. as you once said your learned Adversary, Dr. Berriman, did, by ‘*Dabbling in Ecclesiastical History* ;’ though indeed, the Fact was not real, but only (to match the Expression with a like Piece of Metaphorical Nonsense) a *frigid* Conceit of your own *beated* Imagination.

There is one fallacious Way of Reasoning that runs throughout your whole Performance. *e. g.* Page 10. speaking of the Magistrate’s appointing Rites and Ceremonies in the Worship of God, you exclaim thus, “A Principle which I apprehend will  
“ JUSTIFY all the worst Corruptions of the  
“ *Church of Rome*, which have been, and are  
“ to this Day confirmed by *the lawful Ma-*  
“ *gistrate* !” This sort of arguing is a favourite one with many, and some very considerable

able Writers ; and indeed it is not without Plausibility ; Let us therefore, once for all, make Trial of it, submitting what is said to the Judgment of the intelligent Reader.

The Argument is this ; the Civil Magistrate has a Right, 'tis supposed, to appoint proper Ceremonies in the Worship of God ; therefore he has a Right to appoint what Ceremonies he *thinks*, or *judges* to be proper. Hence it follows, that the several Magistrates of different Religions, or Churches, have an equal Right to appoint what they *think* proper Ceremonies in the Worship of God ; and 'tis added, that this Principle will, *N. B. justify* all the Superstitions and absurd Ceremonies of the Church of *Rome*, or any where else, if appointed by the lawful Magistrate.

Now, to this, I will reply by another *parallel* Argument, which these Reasoners themselves will readily own is not conclusive ; and yet, unless they can shew that it is not exactly as conclusive as the former, there is an End of their Argument. They argue against the Principle of the Magistrate's having a Right to appoint Ceremo-

nies, from the absurd Consequence which, they imagine, follows from it, *viz.* That all Magistrates of different Religions, have an equal Right to appoint Ceremonies in their respective Ways of Worship.

Their Argument, in *Form*, stands thus :

If the Civil Magistrate has a *Right* to appoint Ceremonies in the *Worship of God*; then he has a Right to appoint those *Ceremonies* which he *thinks*, or *judges proper* to be appointed in the *Worship of God*.

But the Civil Magistrate has a *Right* to appoint *Ceremonies* in the *Worship of God*; therefore the Civil Magistrate has a *Right* to appoint those *Ceremonies* which he *thinks*, or *judges proper* to be appointed in the *Worship of God*.

Hence they argue, that, if the Magistrate *think Superstitious Ceremonies* (*i. e.* Ceremonies that are *really Superstitious*) *proper* to be appointed; he has a *Right* to appoint them; and add, that this Principle will JUSTIFY all the Superstitious Ceremonies of *Rome*, &c.

The Answer to which, is as follows :

If the Civil Magistrate has a *Right* to appoint *Laws* for the *Public Good*, then  
he



he has a Right to appoint those Laws which he *thinks fit* to be appointed for the *Public Good*.

But the Civil Magistrate has a *Right* to appoint Laws for the Public Good ;

Therefore the Civil Magistrate has a *Right* to appoint *those Laws* which he *thinks fit* to be appointed for the Public Good.

Therefore, if the Civil Magistrate *think Impositions*, or *Laws* that are *really oppressive* and *hurtful* to Society, *fit* to be appointed for the *Public Good* ; he has a *Right* to appoint them, and then this Principle will *justify* all the *legal Oppressions*, and *Impositions* of Authority in *France*, &c.

Now, if our Objectors can see any Fallacy in this *latter* Reasoning, 'tis hoped that they may be able to see the same in the *former* also ; the Arguments being *parallel*.

—The Reader observes, that the Conclusion against the Civil Magistrate's having any Right, or Authority to appoint Ceremonies in the Worship of God, is drawn from the Absurdity, that is supposed, to attend that Principle. This is the great popular Objection. And 'tis a famous one as

applied in the Controversy about the *Civil Establishment of Religion*. Mr. Chandler, among others, will, I doubt not, readily say, that what *justifies one*, will *justify all Religious Establishments*; and so say All those who do not *distinguish Things* which ought to be distinguished. The Truth is, the Words, *Right, Justify, &c.* are *ambiguous*; and therefore, to put an End to all further Play with them, *Right* means,

1. *Right* in the Sense of *fit and reasonable in the Nature of Things*; This is *absolute Right*.

2. *Right* signifies a Commission and Power to do a Thing, derived from the *Will of a Superior*; this may be called *Right of Authority*.

3. *Right* may mean only that *Obligation* that a Man is under to do That which is *reasonable* to be done, in *his Opinion and Judgment*. Call this, if you please, *Obligation*, or *Right of Conscience*.

Now,

Now, in the *first* Sense of the Word *Right*, 'tis evident, that there can be but *one Right*, the *same* always, and every where. In the *second* Sense of *Right*, there may be more than one. In the *third* Sense of *Right*, there may, and will be just as many Rights as there are Persons of different Persuasions or Judgments. Apply this to the Case in hand; The Civil Magistrate has a *Right*, in the *first* Sense, to make those Laws, and those only, which *really* are for the Public Good. In the *second* Sense of *Right*, different Magistrates may have different Rights, if they derive their Authorities from different Superiors; as is the Case of Subordinate Magistrates under different Governments. And, in the *last* Sense of *Right*, 'tis plain, that *All* Magistrates have an *equal* Right to appoint and establish what they *think* to be reasonable. And now, what is This? or, where is the Absurdity in supposing many different, or even *contradictory*, Rights in this *last* Sense of the Word? 'Tis only laying thus much, and no more, *viz.* that they are *different Obligations*, arising from *different* Judgments, or Opinions; and that different Magistrates will, of Course, be under different Obligations; if they are  
guided



guided, as all other Men are, or ought to be, by their Judgments and Consciences. 'Tis very true, Men may *Err* in their Judgments, but still such Error does not cancel the *Moral Obligation* that every Man is always necessarily under to act according to the Sense and Judgment of his own Mind. —But, whatever Mens Judgments and Opinions are, the absolute *Difference of Right and Wrong, Truth and Falshood* remains *the same*, invariably; and cannot possibly be affected by the Uncertainty of Mens Opinions. Men argue and reason erroneously about Matters of *Morality*, as well as about other Things; but still *Morality itself* is the *same*; and the *Relations and Proportions of Things in Morality*, are just as *necessary in Nature*, as the *Relations and Proportions of Things in Mathematics*; and would, I believe, be *as clear* to Mens Understandings, were it not for Mens Passions and Prejudices. —When 'tis urged, therefore, that, if the Civil Magistrate in *Protestant* Countries, has a *Right* to appoint Ceremonies in Divine Worship, the *Popish* Magistrate hath the *same Right* to appoint the Fopperies of Popery, as proper Ceremonies;

monies; This Consequence is true, but the Fallacy lies in concluding from hence, that, therefore neither of them have a Right to appoint Ceremonies at all — or that *Error* in the *Execution* of a Right, is destructive of the *Right itself*. — As to the Word JUSTIFY, it is evidently used in *different* Senses, according as 'tis used in relation to the *different Senses* of the Word *Right*. Put the Case, that the Magistrate, with *perfect Sincerity*, establishes what is really *Wrang*; you will, I suppose, justify the Magistrate upon Account of his *Sincerity* in doing it: But then, *what is done*, you will not justify. I may be able, perhaps, to justify Mr. *Chandler* in publishing his *Subscription-Book*: He *meant well*, we'll suppose, being desirous of delivering All *honest* Men from the Bondage of *Articles*, and *Church-Impositions*; and therefore allow him to be justified in that he *meant well*: But can we therefore justify *the Thing itself*; and say, that he has *done well*? The next time he employs his Grey Goose-Quill, may he have a *double Justification*, to make amends for present Deficiencies! — As it is absolutely necessary to distinguish as I have

have done ; our Adversaries having Recourse, at every Exigency, to that Fallacy of Arguing *against* Authority, from the *Abuse* of it, and the like ; I hope the Reader has not thought me tedious in treating of these Distinctions.

There is nothing more common with some Reasoners, than to argue *against* a Thing, from the *Abuse* of it ; or, from some accidental *Inconveniences* that attend it. They apprehend *partially*, and do not take all Relations and Circumstances into Consideration. Ask one of that Class what he thinks of the *Copernican System*, *e. g.* and 'tis Ten to One, that you are answered with an Objection about the *Lunar Inequalities* ; not considering the *whole System*, and what must unavoidably follow from those *General Laws* that govern it.——So in *Government* : There *must* be Laws, and there *will*, and *cannot but* be some *Inconveniences*. some *Inequalities*. Must there therefore be *no Government* ? Established Religion, or the Government of the Church, as by Law established, has some consequential *Inconveniences*, and who can help it ? In short, most of the lesser Debates between us and  
our



our Adversaries, resolve, at last, into this great Question, *Whether there should be any religious Establishment, or not?* Or whether the Church be a *wise Society*, to be governed by Laws?—'Tis confessed, that Subscription to Articles of Religion has some Inconveniencies, *viz.* It may tempt Men to be insincere, or hypocritical: So likewise may Oaths in State-Government. But how are these things avoidable?—Thus again; The *Corporation* and *Test-Acts*, considered in one View only, may perhaps appear liable to Exception. Accordingly, we are often told, that those Acts are injurious to the common *natural Rights* of *Mankind*; but then, the *Ground* and *Reason*, the *Necessity*, or *Utility*, of those Acts; the *Whole* of the *Case* being taken into Consideration; the Matter appears in a very different Light; as is shewn in a very judicious Book, intitled, "A Vindication of the Corporation and Test-Acts," which came from the Hand of a *Masterly Reasoner*, and truly great Man; who now, *Supra omnem Invidiam*, adorns one of the highest Stations in our Church.—So again; As to arguing against the *Use* of a Thing, from the

*Abuse*

*Abuse* of it: Authority misapplied will do much Harm; but this is no Objection to *Authority*; which, when *rightly* used or applied, will certainly do much Good. Temporal Emoluments and Advantages are of real Service, by being *Encouragements* to Learning, or Religion; and when misapplied, (as they have *sometimes* been) will do Hurt. They will then be changed into *the Discouragements* of Religion and Learning; but this is no Argument against *Promotions* or *Preferments*, as such.—The *Misapplication* of them, whenever it happens, is indeed very blameable.—Do but once level all your *Preferments*; or, if that cannot be done, make your *Preferments* a *Lottery*: Let your Church-Dignities be mere *Chance-Prizes*, without Regard to Abilities, or Morals, or Letters:—Thus advises the truly politic Free-thinker, who well knows his own Interests; and, indeed, if we do but take his Advice, he will have abundant Reason to thank us for so doing.

You will not be displeased, if I conclude these few Remarks upon your Book, with citing Two *great Authorities*, agreeing, in part, at least, with you; and this, through my Desire of Fairness and Impartiality.

The

The First is, Dr. CLARKE; who, in his Reply to Mr. *Nelson*, pag. 28. speaking of some Terms which his Adversary would call *Explanations* of Scripture Doctrine, and which he calls *Scholastic* and *Metaphysical*, as he does, elsewhere, some Terms used in the 39 Articles; he asks, “Of what Use can the introducing such new Terms be? For either they have no determinate Signification at all; or else they are intended to teach the *same Doctrine* which is taught in Scripture; and then, why could not that Doctrine have been as well, and better expressed in those same Words, which the Wisdom of God thought most proper to express it in? or else, lastly, they express something *different* from what is taught in Scripture; and then they are very bad and dangerous Expressions indeed.’ The only Question is, Why could not that Doctrine, which is expressed by *unscriptural* Words, be *as well*, or *better* expressed by those Words by which the *Scripture* has expressed it? Now, *undoubtedly*, the Words of Scripture, absolutely and *originally* considered, are the *most proper Words* to express the Sense of Scripture; but then, as these

Words



Words are *abused*, as they are used to signify what they do not originally *signify*; as it is now *ambiguous what is meant* by them; they being used in different Senses; and, as it is therefore become necessary to fix and ascertain the Sense of them; it is become necessary to *explain* them (who is to explain, has been already determined) by *other Words*, which *must be unscriptural*: For, as the same Dr. CLARKE observes, in his Answer to another Writer, “ It is *impossible not to use un-* “ *scriptural Expressions in explaining Scrip-* “ *ture.*” To which he adds, “ That ’tis de- “ *sirable, that as few unscriptural Expres-* “ *sions as possible, be used in Creeds, or in* “ *such other Terms as are supposed to have* “ *an Authority, in determining Mens Opi-* “ *nions, distinct from That of mere Rea-* “ *son and Argument.*” Here indeed the Dr, is with me, in admitting that *Some unscriptural Expressions, or Explanations, may be used in Creeds, which is implied by the Words, “ As few as possible.” Answer to the Author of some Considerations, &c. p. 303.*

In Page 308. of the same Book, the Doctor blames the Use of *contrary unscriptural* Ex-

Expressions; i. e. of *unscriptural Expressions* on one Side; *contrary*, or in Opposition to *unscriptural Expressions* on the other. There may be some Truth in this Objection; for possibly *both Sides* may be justly blameable in using *unscriptural Expressions*, in *affirming* and *denying something above what is written*. But, if what is affirmed, or denied, be *contrary to what is written*, it is then *necessary* to affirm the *opposite Doctrine*; which cannot be done *merely by the Words of Scripture*, the *Sense or Meaning* of which is the Thing in Dispute. If I am sure, *e. g.* that the *Arian* *unscriptural* *ἑτεροδοξος* is contrary to the Doctrine of Scripture, may I not affirm, as the Council of NICE did, the *contrary* *ομοδοξος* in Opposition to it? For, of two *contradictory Propositions*, one must, of Necessity be true; and, if it be *necessary* to deny the one, can there be any Unreasonableness in affirming the other? And, if that cannot be done in the *Words of Scripture*, must not *unscriptural Words* be made use of?—These Objections of Dr. CLARKE contain the Strength of what is usually said against *Explanatory Articles*, and they are considerable, as may well be expected from

*such a Writer.* Dr. CLARKE will always command the Regard and Attention of every one who is disposed to attend to what is serious and rational. An Author of uncommon Abilities; and one, who (tho' sometimes mistaken, as all Men are) whatever Cause he took in hand to defend, always made use of the best and most solid Arguments to defend it, and managed those Arguments to the best Advantage; or, in the Words of his great Antagonist Dr. *Waterland*, upon a particular Occasion, his Arguments contained the *whole Strength of the Cause*——And therefore, by the way, how indefensible is that *Arian* (or *Semi-Arian*) Cause, which could not be defended by that able Advocate!

The other Authority is Mr. LOCKE, who wants to be informed (*Third Letter for Toleration*) 'of what Use and Necessity it is 'to make a *Creed*.' For, 'either these 'Creeds are in the *Words of Scripture*, or 'they are not. If they are, they are certainly *sound*, as containing nothing but 'Truth in them: And so they were before, 'as they lay in the Scripture——But if *not*, 'then in *plainer*, more *clear* and *intelligible*  
' *Expres-*



‘ Expressions, or not : If no *plainer*, what  
 ‘ Necessity of changing those, which Men  
 ‘ inspired by the Holy Ghost made use of ?  
 ‘ If you say they are *plainer*, then they ex-  
 ‘ plain and determine the Sense of some ob-  
 ‘ scure and dubious Places of Scripture,  
 ‘ which Explanation, not being of Divine  
 ‘ Revelation, cannot be imposed as Truths  
 ‘ necessary to Salvation.’

*Ans.* By *Explanation* of the Words of  
 Scripture, when we say, that unscriptural  
 Words are necessary to *explain* them, is only  
 meant a *Declaration* of that particular Sense  
 in which the Words are used by a Person  
 amidst the Variety of Senses ; a *Determina-*  
*tion which* is the *true* Sense : And how ne-  
 cessary this is, has been already shewn. We  
 do not pretend to make fundamental Doc-  
 trines *plainer*, or *clearer*, than the Words  
 of Scripture have made them ; but to main-  
 tain the plain Sense of Scripture, and to  
 guard it from false Glosses and Interpreta-  
 tions.

Thus much for the present, in the Way of  
 Reasoning upon this Subject.——In the Con-  
 clusion of your Book, you speak with much  
 Earnestness of a ‘ Scheme of Peace and  
 ‘ Union, an healing of the Divisions that

'have long subsisted amongst us.' This union, you warmly recommend, as a thing that would give a 'Mortal Wound to the 'Interests of Popery;' that it might be 'made the happy Means of checking, at 'least, those Immoralities that strike at the 'Foundation of our national Happiness; 'and which would be the greatest Security 'to his MAJESTY's Throne, and the Succession of his Royal Family; upon which '(we both intirely agree) depend, under God, 'all that is dear and valuable to us, as Men, 'Christians, and Protestants.' p. 180. You cannot, Sir, wish or pray for these Blessings with a more hearty Zeal than I do. May all human Means co-operate and contribute to so great an Happiness! And may every Design and Endeavour to defeat our obtaining it, be baffled and brought to nought! Above all, may *God's Grace* and *Assistance* attend us in the Pursuit of this glorious End! For, sure I am, from the *Nature of Things*, that whatsoever Scheme does *really* and *truly* tend to produce such good Fruits, such inestimable Effects, cannot but be right. This, and more will I say, upon Supposition that the Scheme *really is* so excellent

as

as you represent it to be. If it *be* such ; that is, if it will do *real* Service to the Cause of Religion and Virtue ; if it does *indeed* tend to preserve the pure and rational Worship of the Reformed Church against *Popish Invasions* ; and keep it from being adulterated and corrupted with any Popish Superstitions, and also against *any* Attempts whatever, to make it a less *reasonable Service* : If the Scheme will more firmly ground and establish the Basis of our Civil and Religious Liberty, the Government of that great and good *Prince* who rules (and may he long continue to rule !) over us : I say, Sir, if these *be* the natural Effects and Consequences of your Scheme ; then am I, with every Christian and Protestant, a real Friend and Well-wisher to the Scheme——*but not otherwise.*

But what is this Scheme, this “ blessed “ Design ?” *p.* 182. Why ’tis the “ blessed “ Design of uniting the Protestant Churches “ of these Kingdoms.” By what Means this Union is to be effected, is not expressly said ; but ’tis insinuated, *p.* 181. where you say, “ though there may be Some found “ who will be against making any Con-  
E 3 “ cessions



“cessions for the Sake of Peace ; who will  
 “reproach every *Alteration*, as an Attempt  
 “to subvert the *Church*——Yet, Wisdom,  
 “Patience, Resolution, &c. will soon over-  
 “come all Objections and Difficulties ; fo-  
 “reign Churches will commend her [the  
 “*Church's*] *Moderation*, and *Condescension*,  
 “&c.”——’Tis then, it seems, already de-  
 termined and settled, on which Side the  
*Compliance* is to be. It is, we find, to pro-  
 ceed from the *Moderation* and *Condescension*  
 of *the Church* ; for which in return, she is  
 to be mightily commended.——But all this,  
 Sir, you know very well, is begging a  
 Question, which has been often begged, and  
 as often refused to be granted : Yet still you  
 are thus Importunate. *Who* it is that ought,  
 in Reason to comply in this Case, is the  
 old Question, essentially connected with that  
 grand Question of Questions ; upon the  
 Resolution of which the several Resolu-  
 tions of all other Questions do naturally de-  
 pend ; and this huge Question is, *Who shall*  
*judge* ?——There are *Consciences* on both  
 Sides of the Question ; and ’tis hoped, that  
 the Benefits of Christian Allowance and In-  
 dulgence may be common to Both ; and  
 that,

that, amidst all Compliances with the Weakness of others; whatever Respect any Man ought to have to his Neighbour's Conscience, He may be equitably allowed to have, at least, as much for his own.

You tell us, that we use Things in our Public Worship, which are *useless* and *unnecessary*:—Our Reply is, of that Matter, not *You*, but *We* are to judge.

You proceed to allege, that the Things which give Offence, are allowed, even by those who injoin the Use of them, to be *indifferent*; and that therefore, when they become the Occasion of Strife and Debate, for the Sake of Peace and Unity, they ought to be laid aside.—Now, I must confess, that, in my Judgment, it has been too readily admitted, without Distinction and Limitation, by some eminent Writers on the Side of Ceremonies; that the Things in Question *are indifferent*. It is not true, I say it, and repeat it, that the Church *does* injoin any one Rite, or Ceremony, that is *indifferent* in any other Sense, than that in which *all positive Institutions are indifferent*. There may, indeed, be *something indif-*

ferent in all *positive* Institutions or Injunctions, relative to the *Matter*, or *Manner* of them : But yet, no positive Duty, or Injunction, is so *wholly indifferent* as to exclude *all Reason* whatsoever, for commanding it. *Some Reason*, *some Propriety*, *some Fitness*, either *absolute*, or *relative* ; either *moral*, or *natural* ; (whether we see it or not) there must be, *antecedent* to every Command, or Institution whatsoever, whether Human or Divine : Otherwise the Command cannot be founded in *Wisdom* ; as any one may understand, who will but define to himself, *What Wisdom is*. *Wisdom* necessarily *presupposes*, and cannot be without an *antecedent Difference of Things* ; whether that Difference be *natural* and *essential*, or not. Thus, *e. g.* The Command of washing in Water (for a *Command* it was) to cure *NAAMAN*'s Leprosy, has a *Propriety* from the general Notion we have of the Nature of that Element, which is to *cleanse*, or *purify* ; though the washing in the Waters of *JORDAN* rather than in the Waters of *ABANA*, or *PHARPHAR*, was *indifferent* ; which *very Indifferency* afforded a Ground for the  
Prophet's



Prophet's Command to wash in *JORDAN*. The Rites and Ceremonies, the Institutions of the *Church of England*, have all of them such *Propriety* and *Fitness* as to render them not so wholly indifferent as to exclude *all Reason* for appointing them; or to afford alone a Reason sufficient for giving them up, when appointed. And therefore the Argument for laying them aside, drawn from their supposed *absolute Indifference*, is without Foundation.——Besides, there is a manifest Distinction between *Indifference*, as opposed to *Necessity*; and *Indifference*, as opposed to *Expediency*. The Ceremonies of the *Church of England* are certainly *indifferent* in the former Sense of Indifference; in the latter, they are *not indifferent*; being *proper* and *useful*. Again: It is to be considered, that *Use* and *Custom*, and other Circumstances, make numberless Things *proper*, or *improper*, though they are, in *their own Nature*, perfectly *indifferent*.

But, you cannot, in *Conscience*, comply with any *human Authority* in Matters of Religion:——Now, for the same Reason of *Conscience*, we cannot but comply with,  
and

and obey that Authority, which, in our Estimation, is not *Human*, but *Divine*: *Let every Soul be subject* [in all Things lawful] *unto the Higher Powers*; [both in Ecclesiastical and Civil Government] *For there is no Power but of God: The Powers that be, are ordained of God.* All Commands of the Higher Powers therefore, which we do not think to be *unlawful*, we are in Conscience obliged to obey.

You urge farther, that some Things which the *Church of England* enjoins are *superstitious* — Our Answer is, not *superstitious*, but *expedient*. They are *useful* and *proper*, *symbolical* and *significative* of real Religion. That, if you consider the Things themselves only, the Sign of the Cross used in Baptism, *e. g.* is just as fit to remind us of the ‘Faith of Christ crucified, &c.’ as the Water used in Baptism is to signify the ‘Mystical washing away Sin.’ — We retort also, that you are guilty of *Superstition*; in the very refusing, so scrupulously as you do, to comply with the Use of these Things; and that you are, indeed, *superstitiously* afraid of *Superstition*.

Now,

Now, Sir, How, I pray you, is it, that we are to compromise these Matters? Is it always *Prudence*, to indulge another's *Prejudices*? Is it always *Wisdom*, to comply with another's *Weakness*? ——— For my part, I have read over the *Protestant Reconciler*, and am not convinced, that it is, at all, more *Our Duty to Comply*, than it is *Yours to Conform*.

The Author of a Pamphlet, intituled, *Considerations on a Comprehension or Union of Protestants, by reconciling and uniting the more moderate Dissenters to the Church of England; submitted to the Attention of Our Governors, and all Denominations of Protestants*; reduces the chief Objections made by the Dissenting Laity, against conforming to the *Church of England*, to these Particulars, *viz.* “ A Set Form of Prayer; “ or, at least, the Impropriety of the present Liturgy——the Use of Godfathers “ and Godmothers——the Sign of the “ Cross in Baptism——and kneeling at the “ Sacrament.” Thus much as to *Lay Conformity*.——Then, as to the Case of *Ministerial-Conformity*——“ If the Teachers “ were only required to make a *Declara-*  
*tion,*



"tion, instead of *subscribing*, to any Ar-  
 "ticles, or giving Assent, or Consent to  
 "all Things contained in the Book of  
 "Common Prayer;" and, "If the Re-  
 "ordination of *Dissenting Ministers* were  
 "dispensed with; (see pages 11. 27.) he  
 "could then see no *just* Objections that  
 "could be offered against *Ministerial* Con-  
 "formity, or any Injury to the *Church of*  
 "*England*,"——Never was any thing of  
 like Importance, so easily, so expeditiously  
 effected!

But this is the Case of those who see no  
 Difficulties; and that, not because they  
 see clearly and distinctly, but because they  
 are *short-sighted*. Logicians of this Size,  
 are They who see a little, presume a great  
 deal, jump to a Conclusion, and then won-  
 der at others for boggling at Difficulties. A  
 few specious Things are offered for Com-  
 pliance with the Demands of the *more mo-*  
*derate Dissenters*——The *Athanasian Creed*  
 is to be rejected, and the Liturgy is to be  
 so altered as to please every Body.——The  
 present *unauthorized* Teachers are to be ad-  
 mitted to the Ministry, without Orders;  
 and

and SO we are at once to have a *Comprehension*.

*Quid est, si hæc non Contumelia 'st.*

But, he has some things, page 13, to propose 'for the real Honour and Advantage of the *Church of England*, even without any regard to a *Comprehension*.' And these are, 'A new Translation of the Bible  
'——the reviewing and correcting the present Liturgy, and Book of Common Prayer;  
'the Thirty-nine Articles and Canons.

Now as to an Humble Submission of whatever Matters it seems necessary to reform, to the Wisdom of our Superiors, to whom the Appeal ought to be made; it is a Thing, under proper Circumstances, certainly very reasonable; this being, as I conceive, the first and most proper Method to be taken in order to rectify Errors in Religious Doctrine, or Discipline. The just and true Method in such Case, appears to be, To appeal first to our Governors, and then, if need be, to the Public; instead of applying to the Public upon every Occasion, as the way now is, with little  
good

good Effect, and many evil Consequences. If any thing in Church Doctrine or Discipline wants to be altered, *Tell it to the Church.*

—Our Governors in Church and State are the original, proper Judges in this Case; but then this is never to be so understood as if their Judgment or Determination were to over-rule the Liberty of the Press, or to supersede the Right of *Private Judgement.*

The Necessity of a new Translation of the Bible may deserve Consideration: But the Attempt has its Difficulties. Whosoever has heard into what *Feuds* the City of *Hamburg* ran, on Occasion of a Dispute, whether in the *Lord's Prayer*, the first Words should be translated *Our Father*, or *Father Our*; when the Citizens, through the Zeal of *Doctors differing*, were worked up into such an Heat of Passion, that they separated themselves into Parties, and fought daily in the Streets, cannot want an Instance of Difficulties attending *new Translations.* To say that a new Translation is necessary, is saying what wants to be explained. Because the present Translation is inaccurate, 'tis immediately concluded, that there ought to be a *new one*; whereas, what is *Better*  
upon



upon the whole? Whether, all things considered, be not better to be content with the present Translation, or to re-translate, is the Question. A Review of the Liturgy does not seem to be so necessary as a new Translation of the Bible; and is attended, in some respect, with more Difficulties.

As to the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*——They who have Sense enough to plead any thing to the Purpose, in respect to Alteration, may, perhaps, say, that tho', indeed, those popular Objections which are often made to the Clergy subscribing some of them, in a Sense different from that, which, in all probability, was the Sense of the *Compilers*, are of no Weight, since it is the Sense, *not* of the *Compilers*, but of the *Imposers*, that is to be regarded; yet possibly there may be Reasons of Prudence to recommend some Alteration.——The Subscription to *Calvinistic* Articles, in an *Arminian* Sense, however right and justifiable, has yet, not altogether that Appearance, which it is to be wished it had, to those who cannot well discern and distinguish——*To abstain from all Appearance of Evil*, is confessedly a Duty. It is Wisdom  
and

and Prudence so to do, whenever it can be done consistently with Reason upon the whole of the Case——That some of the Thirty nine Articles were formed upon the *Calvinistic* Plan, is an agreed Point with most Persons; tho' it ought not to be concealed, that some Writers of Authority have endeavoured to evince the contrary; and, among the rest, Dr. *Waterland*, who in his *Case of Arian Subscription*, takes great Pains to shew that the Articles were not *Calvinistic* originally: But herein, the Doctor (with due Deference be it spoken) was certainly mistaken. Tho', by the way, Dr. *Waterland's* Argument to prove the Unlawfulness of *Arian* Subscription, would not be at all affected by admitting that Articles, originally *Calvinistic*, might be fairly subscribed to, in an *Arminian* Sense; there being no Parallel between the subscribing to *Calvinistic* Articles, in an *Arminian* Sense (*Arminian* as opposed to *Calvinistic*) and the subscribing to those Articles which contain the Catholic Doctrine of the *Trinity*, in an *Arian* Sense; for a Latitude is allowable in one Case, not so, in the other. What has been called *Calvinism*.

*vinism* in latter Ages, is no *Catholick* Doctrine: It has been held neither *always*, nor *every-where*: It has generally been confined to a few *Sectaries*; and was scarce ever, if at all, heard of in the Church, before the Time of *St. Austin*.——But to return:

The *Latitude* allowed to Subscribers makes an Alteration of the Articles the less necessary, if the *Sense* of the Articles may be fairly changed, the *Letter* remaining the same. A publick Act of the Church, declarative of the true Intent and Meaning of the *Imposers*, is not necessary in those Instances in which *Latitude* was originally intended; and a *Latitude* *was* intended by the *Compilers* themselves, in several Instances, as has been shewn by Writers upon this Subject: A *Latitude* that Persons might subscribe to the same Articles in that particular *Sense*, which each of them thinks to be agreeable to Scripture. And where the Words of the Article are *special* and *determinate*; and where *no Latitude* can be supposed to have been intended, or to be allowable; 'tis absurd *there*, to suppose the *Sense* of the *Imposers* to vary from *That* of the *Compilers*. In a Word, there are Articles of *Latitude*, and Articles of *no Latitude*



*tude*. In Articles of *no* Latitude, wherein the Words are *special* and *determinate*, and capable of *one* Sense only; 'tis plain no Person can subscribe honestly, unless his Sense of Scripture, and *The One Sense* of the Article be the *same*: But in Articles that admit of Latitude, wherein the Words are fairly capable of different Senses; if *Any One* of those Senses be agreeable to the Subscribers Sense of Scripture, he may fairly and honestly Subscribe. — There certainly is no *Imposition*, in the bad Sense of the Word, in this Affair; no Injury to private Judgment. The *Rule of Faith*, and the only Rule, is the *Holy Scripture*. The Bible is still *the Religion of Protestants*. If a Man cannot reconcile any of these Articles with what appears to him, to be the Doctrine of Scripture, he is at Liberty not to subscribe: Who has required the contrary at his Hands?

And let it by no means be imagined, that the requiring Subscription to *Explanatory Articles of Faith*, is not consistent with the Right of Mens *Private Judgment* in Matters of Religion; for 'tis *supposed* in the Question; otherwise *Subscription* would indeed be not a Thing of *Choice* and free Determination, but

but *a necessary Duty*. For my part, I am as true a Friend to the Right of *Private Judgment*, soberly and rightly understood; that truly moral, and religious, and Reformation Principle, as Mr. *Chandler*, or any other Protestant whosoever. Without any Doubt, sincere Examination and Inquiry is essentially necessary to all Religion. A Man can have *no Opinion*, properly so called, without it: No *rational* Opinion at all; but only a mere Persuasion of Mind concerning the Truth, or Falshood, of Things, determined by *Time* and *Chance*; by Prejudice, or the Notions which happen to prevail in the Age, or Country, in which he happens to live.—In the Case of Subscription to any Doctrine, he who subscribes to what is true, without any previous Examination, does, indeed, *in Fact*, subscribe to *Truth*, and not to *Error*; but then he is, in a Moral Account, exactly as blameable as he would have been, had he, under the like Circumstances, subscribed to the *contrary* Error: Just as he who makes Oath of a Thing as true, which he does not *know* to be so, either *certainly*, or *probably*; according to the sort of Evidence which the Nature of the

Case affords, is equally guilty of *Perjury*, whether the Thing so affirmed, be, *in fact*, true, or not: So necessary is *Private Judgment*. But then, what is here affirmed concerning the Exercise of the natural *Sense* and *Reason* of Mankind in Religious Matters, is not to be understood exclusively of all Consideration of *Authority* in Religious Matters; which has, and must, according to the Nature and Reason of Things, have its proper Weight in determining Mens Judgments. Good Authority is good Reason, in all Cases: And why any one should deny Authority its Weight in determining religious Opinions, is hard to conceive. Yea, there is one Consideration peculiar to Authority in Religious Matters; which I shall express in the following Words of that ingenious and judicious *Divine*, and *Disputant*, Dr. Rogers,---‘ That the Spirit will ever  
‘ be present to the Church of Christ, and  
‘ every Member of it, no good Christian  
‘ will deny: This the Promises of the Gospel evidently teach. But the Question is,  
‘ What Measure and Degree of the Spirit’s  
‘ Assistance, these Promises imply. An *In-*  
‘ *fallibility* in the Exposition of Scripture,  
‘ contrary to any plain Truth, or to our  
‘ clear



' clear Conceptions of the Sense of it, is im-  
 ' possible for any rational Man to admit, in  
 ' any Man, or Number of Men; and con-  
 ' sequently to admit any Sense of Scripture,  
 ' as affirming or promising such Infallibility :  
 ' But an *Authority*, though short of this,  
 ' yet of great Weight and Extent in the Di-  
 ' rection of private Christians; the Institu-  
 ' tion of Christ, the Nature of Society, and  
 ' the Promises of the Spirit, will oblige us  
 ' to acknowlege in the Guides and Pastors of  
 ' the Church : ' — Dr. Rogers's Sermon on  
 1 *Thess.* v. 21. — A *Protestant Church-Au-*  
*thority* there may be, and is; though *Papal*  
*Infallibility* there is none.

But, after all, it must be observed, that  
 there is an unaccountable Beginning at the  
 wrong End, in these Proposals of *Comprehen-*  
*sion*. We hear much of *Lesser Differences*,  
 of *Things Unnecessary*; But, little, or nothing,  
 do we hear of *Differences of Moment and*  
*Importance*. Our great Differences are about  
*Church-Government, Ordinations, Baptisms,*  
 &c. About *These*, your Friends are, for the  
 most part, silent. 'Tis allowed, that the  
 Church has a Power to alter *Some Things*,  
 but not *Every Thing*. Some Matters there

are, about which we differ, which I conceive to be *absolutely unalterable*; and to which you must comply, for we cannot, before the *Blessed Design* is put into Execution. — If you have any Design *at bottom*, which is not yet to be discovered,

*Dolis Instructus et Arte Pelasgâ,*

Take my Advice, and keep it *secret*; and reconsider it *calmly* and *impartially*; and then, perhaps, you may see, that the Improbability of its Success has justified your Wisdom in *concealing* your Design.

One would not be over-suspicious of Mischief; but, who can say how this same plausible *Scheme of Union* would turn out, were it to be fully *explained* to us? Possibly no less to our Surprise and Admiration than the Explication of certain Words of the Apostle did, once upon a Time, to a fanatical Audience, when the Preacher, having repeated his Text, which was 2 *Tim.* iv. 13. *Bring the Books, but especially the Parchments*; began to inquire what were the *Contents* of those Parchments, and they were,

1. *Negatively, Not the LITURGY of the Church of England.*

2. *Nega-*

2. *Negatively, Not the ARTICLES of the Church of England.*

3. *Again, Negatively, Not the CANONS and CONSTITUTIONS of the Church of England.*

After which, he proceeded, in due Form and Order, to tell them, *positively, what was contained in those Parchments.* — And, now, what do you *Think* that was? — Why, truly, THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT, *every Word of it.*

But, to be serious — For my part, I can see but little Ground for *Compliance*, or *Alteration*, all things considered. These are dangerous Things. We know not what Advantages may be taken of our Concessions, by an ungenerous Adversary. ‘ The  
 ‘ Enemy to whom we give Advantage, may  
 ‘ expect to draw us on farther, upon the  
 ‘ same Motive or Principle. If we yield  
 ‘ to *Importunity*, rather than to *Reason*, in  
 ‘ one Case, why not in another? Or if the  
 ‘ *First* Step taken out of the Way, can  
 ‘ appear *rational*; why not a *Second*, and a  
 ‘ *Third*, and so on, till there be no End  
 ‘ of wandering? It is frequently the Case  
 ‘ of those over-complying Gentlemen, that  
 ‘ while they stoop too low in Hopes to



' fetch others up, they are themselves  
 ' dragged down, and can never recover it.  
 ' They are insensibly carried over to the  
 ' Party towards which they lean; and in-  
 ' stead of preserving a Balance, which they  
 ' lost in the first Decline, they are at length  
 ' found to run in with the other Extreme.'

Thus observes that *Learned* and *Judicious*  
 Writer, Dr. *Waterland* †. We know not  
 what Advantages may be taken of our giving  
 Ground, or whither our Compliances may  
 at length carry us. We must stop *somewhere*,  
 and where can we better Stop,  
 than at that Ground on which the Wisdom  
 of our Forefathers has placed us? *Somewhere*  
 we must fix our Standard, if we were  
 to remove it; and where could we again  
 better fix it, than on that Spot, where those  
 great Champions of the *Protestant Religion*,  
 our first Reformers, chose to fix it? To  
 their Wisdom let us pay this pious De-  
 ference, and stand fast with one Heart, and  
 one Mind, in the Defense of that *Pure and*  
*Reformed Church*, which God, by those glo-  
 rious *Instruments* of his Providence has *here*

† *Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.* p. 139.

planted. Let us be zealous for its Honour and Interests; Let us be steady in its Principles; and maintain its Cause, not only against its great Adversary the *Church of Rome*, but also against *All its Enemies!*

You, Sir, notwithstanding all the fine Talk in the Close of your Letter, about ‘Uniting-Schemes, Healing Divisions, and Joining together in One, all Parties who fear God, and believe the Christian Doctrines, against Popery, which thrives by our Divisions;’ You, Sir, are recommending Measures, which, in Effect and Consequence, will *disunite* and *divide* us. Mr. *White’s* Scheme of *uniting Protestants*, by shewing, as he does, in a very strong Light, the *Unreasonableness* of Dissension and Separation from the Established Religion; and that in a *mild Way*, and in the *Words of a Friend*, in his polite and genteel Letters to a *Dissenting Gentleman*, instead of dealing out the Terrors of Damnation to all *Schismatics*, as some have done; This *rational* Method has been represented truly, as an improper Conduct in our present Circumstances; as ‘raising Controversies about Lesser Matters; stirring up Coals of Contention, &c.’—There  
may

may be *Art* or *Design*; but there is, however, little *Sense*, or *Honesty*, in such a Representation. Besides, it comes with a very ill Grace from the Man, who is, at the same time, *Himself raising Controversies*; and that, not about *Lesser Matters*, but about *Greater Matters*; about *all those Matters* which have been the Occasion of religious Differences among Protestants: For *all those Matters* will surely be brought into Debate, whensoever we come to consider, and talk about Points of *Alteration*. You are disquieting and conjuring up the peaceful Shades of the *Bateses* and *Baxters*, those *Heroes* of Renown in the good old Cause of Presbytery and Puritanism, who now rest from their glorious Labours. — Mr. *White's* Way of ‘stirring up the Coals of Contention,’ is, at most, only by Disputing *against Alteration*: But *your* Way of doing it, Sir, is by *attempting to practise it*. Mr. *White* only contends for Things *as they now stand*; but *you* are vehemently desirous of *having them altered*: Talking that you are ‘willing to do every thing in your Power;’ ‘that if the Providence of God should’ ‘make you, though but the *Lowest Instru-*

‘ *ment*



'*ment* to carry on and effect the *Blessed*  
'*Design*, &c.'—Really, if the Affair were  
not too serious, 'twould be the Height of  
*Comedy* to see you thus raising, in effect,  
Contention and Noise all around you; and,  
at the same time, wiping your Mouth, and  
declaring, with much Gravity and Compo-  
sure—That Mr. *White* is 'stirring up the  
'dead Coals of a Contention.'

An huge fat Man in Country-Fair,  
Or City-Church, (no matter where)  
Labour'd and push'd amidst the Croud,  
Still bauling out extremely loud;  
Lord save us! why do People press!  
Another, marking his Distress,  
Friendly reply'd—Plump Gentleman!  
Get out as fast as e'er you can:  
Or cease to push, or to exclaim;  
*You* make the very Croud you blame.

PRIOR.

But, what I mean, more especially, by  
your being *instrumental* in dividing us, is  
in respect to the Project of laying aside  
*Subscription to Articles of Religion*. The  
zealous *Jesuit*, let me tell you, has scarce  
a better

a better Project to ruin the *Protestant* Cause than This is : For, what Division and Confusion in the *Christian Church*, the laying aside Subscription to Articles of Religion, would introduce, is, from what has been already observed, very evident. 'Tis the great Point of the Church of *Rome* to *separate* and *divide* us, that so we may become an easy Prey to those *who would devour us*. The *Divisions* of *Protestants* among themselves, are *their Triumphs* : For this End they spare neither Cost nor Pains ; and are daily sending forth a Multitude of disguised *Emissaries*, in every Shape of Counterfeit. *Division* amongst us is the grand Point, by them laboured with all Industry.

*Hoc Ithacus velit, et magno mercentur  
Atridæ.*

The caballing Jesuits are, perhaps, at this very time, thus reasoning — ‘ If the Protestant Churches (as they call ’em) would  
‘ but be persuaded to lay aside their *Subscriptions and Articles*, the plain Consequence  
‘ is, that all manner of new Doctors would  
‘ be

' be admitted to their Ministry; and then,  
 ' amidst the *many Teachers, of many Minds,*  
 ' the innumerable *different Opinions and*  
 ' *Disputes, and Heresies* arising about every  
 ' thing, the Minds of the People would  
 ' soon be sufficiently *unsettled* and bewildered  
 ' in Uncertainty; perplexed and lost in  
 ' Labyrinths of Errors; and then they would be  
 ' ready enough to accept of the Direction of  
 ' an *Infallible Guide.*' What then are you  
 doing? Surely, not employed in doing *their*  
 Business? Yes, instead of being an *Instru-*  
*ment of Uniting Protestants,* You are (to make  
 some sort of Return for your *Compliments* to  
 the *Imposition and Popery* of the *Church*  
*of England*) the *Tool* of *Jesuits*; not  
 their *Fellow-Labourer*, but their *Engine*,  
 employed and set to work against Subscrip-  
 tions to *Explanatory Articles*, which are the  
*Fortress* of the *Church of England*; and which,  
 therefore, once destroyed, we are left de-  
 fenseless; and exposed to those Enemies  
 who will enter, and be our Ruin.

Among many of those who appear to be  
 in earnest about the great Affair of Reli-  
 gion; *Moderation, Charity, mutual Allow-*  
*ance* for Difference of Opinion, and the like,

are



are the everlasting Theme; and yet, if we may judge from their manner of treating those who differ from them, the Moderation and Allowance so much talked of, seems to be the *Moderation* expected from *others* towards *themselves*, and not the contrary. Look among the different Sects of Christians, and see whether this be not true; and remarkably true of those very People who talk loudest about this Virtue. — So in Controversies: Are there any Writers, who treat others with less Candor and Allowance, than Some of those who harangue most upon the Excellency of this *Moderation* and *Christian Forbearance*? — All this the *Truly-moderate Church of England* seriously recommends to the Consideration of the *Zealous Mr. Chandler*, and Dissenters of all Denominations; both (to use a late Distinction of a Friend of theirs) to the *more moderate*, and to the *less moderate* †. Alas! Courteous Reader, so it is! Much of this Virtue is there in *Theory*; why then so little in *Example* and *Reality*! We see it continually in some *Mens Papers*; why then so

† *Considerations on a Comprehension, &c.*

seldom in their *Practices*? If the *Root* be indeed *Holy*, why not also the *Branches*!

*MODERATION!* tell us, What *art* Thou? Surely, not, at last, like *Brutus's* shadowy, *unreal* *Virtue*, nothing but *mere* *Name* only!

— *Te, nos DIVAM facimus, Cæloque locamus.*

Why then are thy benign Influences so little felt and experienced in the Tempers and Dispositions of Men!

*Ditton upon Thames, Surry,*  
*June 30. 1748.*

*F I N I S.*

TO THE  
HONORABLE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
IN SENATE  
AND  
COMMITTEES  
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AND  
COMMITTEES  
OF THE SENATE  
AND  
COMMITTEES  
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AND  
COMMITTEES  
OF THE SENATE

4-06-58  
and  
L. J. ...

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